at about a million. When he died, December *20,*1722, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, K'ang Hsi had completed not only one of the longest, but one of the ablest reigns in the annals of the Empire.

YUNG CHENG (1723-1735)

In his last days K'ang Hsi had been disturbed by bitter rivalries over the succession, for he had many sons and no rule of primogeniture existed. The successful competitor is best known to posterity under the title of his reign-period, Yung Cheng. In his forties when his father's death placed him in power, he had only a little over twelve years more of life. He was by no means a genius, but he was ambitious and a hard worker. He reformed the finances and reduced corruption among officials. He was an interested student of religion, especially of Ch'an Buddhism. He wrote a number of books.

In internal administration Yung Cheng was more fearful of sedition than had been K'ang Hsi: at least he seems to have been at more pains to prevent it. He appears to have had a kind of secret service for ferreting out treason. He treated several of his brothers with great harshness, perhaps to prevent them from rebelling, but possibly to satisfy old grudges. These family quarrels, indeed, are a decidedly prominent and unlovely feature of the annals of the reign. While continuing to employ the Jesuits in Peking, Yung Cheng instituted a much more severe persecution of Christianity than had been known since his father's minority—perhaps because of the supposed support of the missionaries, during K'ang Hsi's lifetime, of other aspirants to the succession, and possibly out of dislike for that religion or from fear that it might lead to internal sedition. It was due to him that

a new body, the *Chun Chi Ch'u,* usually called in English the Grand Council or Council of State was substituted for the *Nei Ko,* or Grand Secretariat of the Ming, as the inner group or cabinet with which the Emperor consulted on affairs of state—although the older institution continued to exist as an honorary body with much reduced functions. He centralized administration more and more in the crown.

In foreign affairs Yung Cheng had to face hostilities in the West. An uprising in the Kokonor region was followed by a fresh war with the Eleuths. These ancient enemies of his father were